

7.0 CONSERVATION ELEMENT

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Residents of the Town of Los Gatos have significant concerns about the conservation of natural resources, as well as preventing the wasteful exploitation, destruction, or neglect of such resources. This element is designed to protect and enhance these natural resources and the environment. The Conservation Element promotes the sustainability of resources and the natural ecology for both current and future generations. Problems associated with natural resource conservation are often regional in scope and may extend beyond a Town's physical boundaries. This element therefore addresses problems that are both local and regional in scope.

The Town is characterized by a semiarid climate, and large portions of the Planning Area are composed of hilly terrain. The Town has identified its need for energy conservation in both existing, and future developments and structures. This element divides conservation concerns into the following five (5) categories: soil, water, air, plant, and wildlife. It also addresses recycling and energy conservation.

7.2 GOALS, POLICIES, IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIES

ISSUE: 1

The Town of Los Gatos is characterized by hilly terrain and is located on the lower slope of the Santa Cruz Mountains. The Town can use effective landscape and grading plans to prevent soil erosion and slippage, and help conserve the Town's soil resources.

Goal:

C.G.1.1 To conserve the soil resources of the Town.

Policies:

- C.P.1.1 All new developments shall be required to submit landscape, grading, and building plans that effectively prevent soil erosion and slippage.
- C.P.1.2 Construction plans shall be reviewed to determine the adequacy of erosion control plans during and after construction.

Implementing Strategies:

- C.I.1.1 Erosion control plans: All developments in areas subject to soil erosion and slippage shall furnish effective erosion control plans to minimize soil erosion. The erosion control plans shall be implemented prior to other construction operations and maintained throughout the construction process and until grading has been stabilized and landscaping been established. Required landscaping shall be complete prior to the occupancy of any new structures and the landscaping shall be maintained for at least two years or until it is established.

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| <u>Time Frame:</u> | On-going |
| <u>Responsible Party:</u> | Planning, Engineering and Parks |

ISSUE: 2

California has experienced drought conditions throughout periods of the last decade. As the Town of Los Gatos is characterized by a semiarid climate, the Town must identify whether special water conservation measures are necessary. The Town must also be concerned with water supply and water quality. Do restrictions placed on land uses within watershed and riparian areas help conserve water quality? How can the Town minimize the discharge of non-point source pollution into the storm drain system to protect its natural water resources?

Goal:

- C.G.2.1 To conserve the water resources of the Town.
- C.G.2.2 To protect and preserve watersheds.
- C.G.2.3 To minimize the amount of storm water runoff, as well as to protect and improve the quality of runoff.
- C.G.2.4 To promote water conservation and the efficient use of water.
- C.G.2.5 To insure an adequate water supply for the Town's plant and animal wildlife as well as human populations.
- C.G.2.6 To protect riparian corridors including intermittent and ephemeral streams.

Policies:

- C.P.2.1 Apply land use regulations, scenic easements, or other appropriate measures to keep a maximum of the watershed and lands immediately contiguous to reservoirs and stream channels in an open, natural state.
- C.P.2.2 Prevent surface flow of septic tank seepage by inspection of any suspect septic tank systems. Require connection to the sanitary sewer system when feasible.
- C.P.2.3 Consider the single and cumulative impacts on water drainage (runoff) and contamination (water quality) in the environmental review process of development in all areas but particularly in or adjacent to hillsides, riparian lands or important undeveloped watershed areas.
- C.P.2.4 Establish natural open space and recreation as the priority land use designation for lands immediately adjacent to reservoirs and streams.
- C.P.2.5 Delineate and adopt designated floodways for all major streams utilizing the full flood plain concept as a first priority and the modified flood plain concept as a second priority for flood plain development.
- C.P.2.6 Promote landscaping that is based on principles of water conservation.
- C.P.2.7 Promote non-point source pollution control programs to reduce and control the discharge of non-point source pollutants into the storm drain system.
- C.P.2.8 Limit land use intensity in areas with inadequate water supply.

- C.P.2.9 Cooperate with the Santa Clara Valley Water District and their agencies to protect watersheds and riparian habitats from degradation.
- C.P.2.10 Retain creek beds, riparian corridors, water courses and associated vegetation in their natural state to assist groundwater percolation and prevent erosion and downstream sedimentation.
- C.P.2.11 Assess the potential for new development to contaminate surface water and/or groundwater.
- C.P.2.12 Require new development to demonstrate how it makes efficient use of water.
- C.P.2.13 Work with Town businesses and residents to encourage water conservation.
- C.P.2.14 Protect riparian corridors through use of restrictive setbacks or other protective measures as appropriate to the site.

Implementing Strategies:

- C.I.2.1 Evaluations: Include detailed evaluations of the individual and cumulative impacts on water drainage and contamination for any development application on riparian lands or undeveloped watershed areas.

Time Frame: On-going
Responsible Party: Engineering

- C.I.2.2 Creekside plans: Development plans shall be prepared for Los Gatos and Guadalupe Creeks which include: a) the use of flood-prone areas and riparian habitats as open space, b) redevelopment including re-contouring and landscaping where the natural environment has been altered by channelization, and c) paths for bicyclists and/or hikers.

Time Frame: 2000-2005
Responsible Party: Parks, Engineering and Santa Clara Valley Water District

- C.I.2.3 Coordination: Planning efforts should be coordinated with the Santa Clara Valley Water District.

Time Frame: On-going
Responsible Party: Planning, Engineering and Santa Clara Valley Water District

- C.I.2.4 Landscaping: Land surrounding reservoirs and streams should be improved by the addition of trees and shrubs, especially adjacent to areas where banks or channels have been modified for flood protection.

Time Frame: 2000-2005
Responsible Party: Parks and Santa Clara Valley Water District

- C.I.2.5 Flood plain zones: Flood plain zoning shall be adopted to prevent inappropriate development in areas subject to flooding.
- Time Frame: 2000-2005
Responsible Party: Engineering and Planning
- C.I.2.6 Water conservation: Continue to review all landscape plans as specified by the Town Code section on Water Efficient Landscaping.
- Time Frame: On-going
Responsible Party: Parks
- C.I.2.7 Public water required: Parcels without public water or sewers. For individual home site development where public water and sanitary sewer systems are not available, development shall be discouraged. Development may be allowed with private water systems and septic tank systems when such systems are shown to be adequate, with the condition that the property owner enters into an agreement to connect to the public water system and sanitary sewer system when they become available.
- Time Frame: On-going
Responsible Party: Planning and Engineering
- C.I.2.8 Require landscaping in new developments and remodels that is based on the principles of water conservation, including the use of drought tolerant plants, limited turf areas and water conserving techniques.
- Time Frame: On-going
Responsible Party: Parks
- C.I.2.9 Require the use of water-saving devices in new developments and plumbing-related remodels, and develop incentives to encourage their installation in existing development.
- Time Frame: On-going
Responsible Party: Parks
- C.I.2.10 Cooperate with the Santa Clara Valley Water District and other appropriate agencies to explore options for bringing reclaimed water to Los Gatos, and provide incentives to encourage its use for public and private landscaping and decorative lakes, ponds, and fountains.
- Time Frame: 2001 - 2003
Responsible Party: Planning, Engineering, and Parks
- C.I.2.11 Enforce protection of riparian corridors.
- Time Frame: On-going
Responsible Party: Planning, Engineering, and Parks

ISSUE: 3

Problems associated with the conservation of air resources tend to be regional in scope. This section attempts to devise methods of air resource conservation that address both local and regional air quality issues.

Goal:

- C.G.3.1 To conserve the air resources of the Town.
- C.G.3.2 To maintain and improve acceptable air quality in Los Gatos.

Policies:

- C.P.3.1 Promote design criteria for site plans to reduce the effects of high air pollution concentrations associated with roadways, by appropriate placement of structures, use of landscaping and parking arrangements.
- C.P.3.2 Support BAAQMD, MTC, State and Federal planning efforts and programs aimed at reducing air pollution within the airshed.
- C.P.3.3 Encourage the development and use of mass public transportation systems within the Town and surrounding region.
- C.P.3.4 Encourage reduction of air pollution by encouraging the use of the Route 85 corridor for cross-town circulation.
- C.P.3.5 Pursue reduction of individual auto use by requiring a plan for alternatives to auto use whenever the traffic generated by any development would result in an adverse increase in air and noise pollution.
- C.P.3.6 Ensure that local land use decisions support air quality goals.
- C.P.3.7 Maintain street trees, plant additional street trees and encourage preservation and planting of trees on private property.

Implementing Strategies:

- C.I.3.1 Assessment studies: Site plans should be reviewed to include an assessment of the potential adverse impact from air pollution and recommend alternatives to reduce such impacts.

Time Frame: On-going
Responsible Party: Planning and Engineering

- C.I.3.2 Reduce auto pollutants: Support MTC recommendations for reduction of auto pollutants. (See list in Technical Appendix.)

Time Frame: On-going
Responsible Party: Planning and Engineering

- C.I.3.3 Maintain and promote tree planting programs on public and private property.

Time Frame: On-going
Responsible Party: Parks

- C.I.3.4 Encourage electric charging stations in new public and private developments and remodels, including parking garages; develop incentives to encourage retrofits in existing facilities.

Time Frame: On-going
Responsible Party: Planning and Engineering

- C.I.3.5 Study a ban on gardening equipment that may adversely affect air quality.

Time Frame: 2001 - 2002
Responsible Party: Planning

ISSUE: 4

Los Gatos is proud of its status as a "Tree City U.S.A." Trees and other plant life can prevent soil erosion, landslides and flooding while ensuring a scenic buffer from the effects of development and providing wildlife habitats. Los Gatos recognizes that pollution (whether vehicular or industrial), development, residual pesticides, and recreational activities can damage plant life and wildlife habitat. Many town ordinances and the Hillside Specific Plan serve to conserve trees and natural vegetation, as well as preserve landscape vistas.

Goal:

- C.G.4.1 To conserve and augment the plant life of the Town.
- C.G.4.2 To prevent damage to plant life in the hillsides, watershed and riparian areas.

Policies:

- C.P.4.1 Use existing ordinances and enact any necessary others to preserve trees on public and private property.
- C.P.4.2 Preserve heritage trees and specimen.
- C.P.4.3 Preserve the habitat of species that are native, have special value to the Town or are threatened/endangered.
- C.P.4.4 Preserve riparian corridors.
- C.P.4.5 Preserve wetlands.
- C.P.4.6 Preserve nesting sites.
- C.P.4.7 Promote public and private projects that protect native plant species.
- C.P.4.8 Prevent development that significantly depletes, damages or alters existing plant life, wildlife habitat or landscape vistas.
- C.P.4.9 Require that specific landscaping plans accompany development projects in town and hillside areas.
- C.P.4.10 Allow no more than minimal landscaping and turf in hillside areas.
- C.P.4.11 Encourage preservation and use of native plant species in hillside areas.

C.P.4.12 Enforce the grading standards set forth in the Hillside Specific Plan.

C.P.4.13 Require street trees in new developments.

C.P.4.14 Prohibit off-road vehicles in native plant areas.

Implementing Strategies:

C.I.4.1 Native plants: Review site plans to ensure that native or other appropriate plant materials are used to reduce maintenance and irrigation costs and disruption of the native ecology.

Time Frame: On-going

Responsible Party: Planning and Parks

C.I.4.2 Tree preservation ordinance: Town ordinances shall encourage the maintenance of specimen or heritage trees and limit the removal of all trees. The ordinances shall be reviewed periodically for necessary updating.

Time Frame: On-going

Responsible Party: Planning, Town Attorney and Parks

C.I.4.3 Preserving existing plants: Amend the grading ordinance to establish standards to maintain and preserve existing native plant species.

Time Frame: On-going

Responsible Party: Planning, Engineering and Parks

C.I.4.4 Review all development proposals to ensure appropriate grading and landscaping and minimal disruption to existing plant life and wildlife habitat.

Time Frame: On-going

Responsible Party: Planning, Engineering and Parks

C.I.4.5 Apply Hillside Specific Plan to ensure minimal grading, and to protect plant life and landscape vistas.

Time Frame: On-going

Responsible Party: Planning, Engineering and Parks

ISSUE: 5

Wildlife resources must be evaluated in terms of the benefits they bring to Town life, while keeping in mind the safety and well being of Town residents. Wildlife populations must be preserved as having intrinsic value that contributes to the quality of Town life.

Goal:

C.G.5.1 To conserve the wildlife populations.

Policies:

C.P.5.1 Minimize, and where feasible, eliminate the use of herbicides and slowly bio-degrading pesticides to minimize potential damage to native plants, birds, and other wildlife.

*Wildlife
Resources*

- C.P.5.2 Coordinate the protection and continuation of wildlife species and habitats with State and Federal agencies.
- C.P.5.3 Maintain open space and native plant communities that provide habitat and migration corridors for native and viable introduced species.
- C.P.5.4 Establish sound land management practices that will improve wildlife habitats.
- C.P.5.5 Identify and protect areas where there is a high degree of diversity in the types of habitat available for wildlife.
- C.P.5.6 Promote the design of public and private projects that provide the maximum protection of wildlife populations.
- C.P.5.7 Limit public access in areas where significant wildlife populations exist.

Implementing Strategies:

- C.I.5.1 Wildlife habitats and migration corridors: Site plans shall be reviewed to insure that existing significant wildlife habitats and migration corridors are not adversely affected by either individual or cumulative development impacts.

Time Frame: On-going
Responsible Party: Planning and Parks

- C.I.5.2 Enforcement: Local, state and national regulations protecting against the destruction of wildlife and wildlife habitat shall be strictly enforced.

Time Frame: On-going
Responsible Party: Planning and Parks

- C.I.5.3 Open space dedication: The Town shall use requirements for open space dedication as a means to protect wildlife.

Time Frame: On-going
Responsible Party: Planning and Parks

ISSUE: 6

Garbage disposal and recycling has become an issue for all of us. The resources used to produce the items which end up in landfills are dwindling. The space in the landfill itself is a dwindling resource. Los Gatos needs to address these problems on many levels.

Goal:

- C.G.6.1 To promote recycling and reuse as well as reduction in demand.
- C.G.6.2 To conserve space in the landfills.

Policies:

- C.P.6.1 Encourage residential and commercial recycling of reusable materials.
- C.P.6.2 Encourage recycling and reuse of building materials from remodeled and demolished buildings.

C.P.6.3 Cooperate with nearby jurisdictions and regional jurisdictions to design and implement coordinated recycling plans.

C.P.6.4 Encourage reductions in use of nonrenewable resources in building construction, maintenance, and operations.

Implementing Strategies:

C.I.6.1 Continue and expand programs through the local waste hauler for recycling.

Time Frame: On-going
Responsible Party: Community Services

C.I.6.2 Consider implementing a reuse center for building materials from remodeled and demolished buildings.

Time Frame: 2002 - 2003
Responsible Party: Community Services

C.I.6.3 Continue to work with other West Valley Cities through the West Valley Cities Solid Waste JPA to design and implement expanded recycling programs.

Time Frame: On-going
Responsible Party: Community Services

C.I.6.4 Continue to work with the Santa Clara County Solid Waste Commission.

Time Frame: On-going
Responsible Party: Community Services

C.I.6.5 Develop policies, incentives, and design guidelines that encourage the public and private purchase and use of durable and nondurable items, including building materials, made from recycled materials or renewable resources.

Time Frame: 2002 - 2003
Responsible Party: Community Services

ISSUE 7:

Energy resources, while varied, are not limitless. The traditional energy resources used (gas, electricity) are non-renewable, and conservation of these resources for future generations is imperative.

Goal:

C.G.7.1 To foster development that reduces the use of non-renewable energy resources and expands the use of renewable resources and alternative fuels.

Policies:

C.P.7.1 Encourage construction and use of technologies that maximize energy conservation.

Energy

- C.P.7.2 Encourage the use of energy conservation techniques and technology in existing development.
- C.P.7.3 Design structures to maximize natural heating and cooling (passive solar heating and cooling.)
- C.P.7.4 Utilize landscaping for passive cooling and protection from prevailing winds.
- C.P.7.5 Protect existing development from loss of solar access.
- C.P.7.6 Continue to pursue energy-efficiency in Town operations.
- C.P.7.7 Encourage use of renewable energy sources and alternative fuels.
- C.P.7.8 Promote local employment opportunities to reduce consumption of fuel used for commuting.
- C.P.7.9 Require higher levels of energy efficiency as house size increases.

Implementing Strategies: (Non-transportation programs)

- C.I.7.1 Code Amendments: Amend the Town Code to establish regulations, in addition to Title 24 requirements, that promote and require the conservation of energy and the use of renewable energy sources as follows:
 - A. Protect solar access to existing buildings and all installed solar energy systems.
 - B. Develop specific design guidelines for energy efficient architectural designs, site plans and landscaping to be used during plan review of all new developments.
 - C. Require the provision and protection of solar access in all new development through the dedication of private solar access covenants.
 - D. Require that all new developments be designed to take advantage of passive solar heating and cooling opportunities as specified by Section 66473.1 of the Subdivision Map Act. The word "feasible" is as defined in Sec. 66473.1.
 - E. Require the use of solar water heaters on all new residential buildings where solar access is available and natural gas is not available. Require pre-plumbing for solar water heaters on all other new residential construction where solar access is available.
 - F. Require solar energy as the primary means of heating new swimming pools, where solar access is available.
 - G. Identify any current Town regulation that may limit feasible energy conservation or solar energy applications and consider modification.

Time Frame: 2001 - 2003 and On-going
Responsible Party: Planning and Building

C.I.7.2 Energy Rating System: The Town, in conjunction with the local board of realtors and local developers and architects, shall participate in the development and implementation of an energy efficiency rating system for existing and new residential structures to assist home buyers in selecting energy efficient homes.

Time Frame: 2000 - 2005

Responsible Party: Building

C.I.7.3 Weatherization: The Town shall continue to promote the rapid weatherization of all homes through publicizing available utility energy audit and financing programs and investigate possible contracting with PG & E to identify participants.

Time Frame: On-going

Responsible Party: Building and Community Services

C.I.7.4 Sustainable Los Gatos Information Center: Establish and maintain a "sustainability information center" at the Town Hall to inform the public and distribute available brochures.

Time Frame: 2000 - 2005 and On-going

Responsible Party: Building

C.I.7.5 Energy Conservation Programs: The Town shall continue to adopt the following energy saving steps for Town facilities and operations:

- A. Conduct, with assistance from PG&E, a thorough energy audit of all Town facilities to identify cost-effective opportunities for conservation and use of solar energy systems.
- B. Designate a high-level staff person as the Town Energy Manager who is responsible for coordinating and meeting in-house energy conservation goals.
- C. Establish realistic yearly goals for reductions in Town energy costs and keep Town personnel aware of program status.
- D. Establish a fuel conservation program for Town vehicle fleet and require Gas Cap driver training for all employees who use fleet vehicles.

Time Frame: On-going

Responsible Party: Public Works